

## Message Text

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ACTION IO-14

INFO OCT-01 EA-10 ISO-00 HA-05 VO-05 CA-01 SY-05  
AID-05 CIAE-00 DODE-00 INR-10 NSAE-00 PA-01  
USIA-06 SP-02 NSC-05 SS-15 /085 W  
-----064218 191242Z /23

R 170738Z FEB 78  
FM AMEMBASSY BANGKOK  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9967  
INFO INS WASHDC  
AMEMBASSY CANBERRA  
AMEMBASSY KUALA LUMPUR  
AMEMBASSY MANILA  
AMEMBASSY SINGAPORE  
AMCONSUL HONG KONG  
USMISSION GENEVA

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INS/CO FOR CODEP (COEXM)

EO 11652: N/A  
TAGS: SREF  
SUBJ: IRC COMMISSION MEETING WITH DEPUTY INTERIOR MINISTER  
PREM TINSULANON

1. SUMMARY: THE IRC COMMISSION MET WITH DEPUTY INTERIOR  
MINISTER PREM FEBRUARY 13. CHAIRMAN LEO CHERNE EXPLAINED THAT  
THE COMMISSION'S OBJECTIVE WAS TO STIMULATE U.S. GOVERNMENT  
AGENCIES TO ADOPT BROADER AND MORE GENEROUS POLICIES TOWARD  
INDOCHINESE REFUGEES. CHERNE ASKED PREM WHETHER, GIVEN IMPROVED  
THAI DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS WITH INDOCHINESE COUNTRIES, THAILAND  
MIGHT CHANGE ITS GENEROSITY TOWARD REFUGEES. PREM SAID THAT TALKS  
WITH THESE COUNTRIES HAD NOT YET TOUCHED ON REFUGEES. HE POINTED  
OUT THAT THAILAND'S CHIEF PROBLEM WAS THE NUMBER OF REFUGEES IT  
COULD ABSORB. THE THAI WOULD APPRECIATE SPEEDIER DEPARTURE FOR  
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ALL REFUGEES THAT THE UNITED STATES ACCEPTED. END SUMMARY

2. LEO CHERNE, CHAIRMAN OF AN INTERNATIONAL RESCUE COMMITTEE  
COMMISSION CURRENTLY VISITING THAILAND TO EXAMINE THE INDO-  
CHINESE REFUGEE SITUATION, MET WITH THAI DEPUTY INTERIOR MINISTER  
PREM TINSULANON AND OTHER MINISTRY OFFICIALS FEBRUARY 13. OTHER  
MEMBERS OF THE COMMISSION INCLUDED: JOHN AND THELMA RICHARDSON,

BAYARD RUSTIN, MSGR. JOHN AHERN, AND STEVEN YOUNG. CHERNE EXPLAINED THAT HIS GROUP CONSISTED OF EXPERIENCED AMERICANS REPRESENTING NO ONE GROUP BUT ASSOCIATED WITH EACH OTHER IN THEIR COMMON CONCERN ABOUT THE REFUGEE PROBLEM. THE COMMISSION HOPED TO STIMULATE VARIOUS U.S. GOVERNMENT AGENCIES TO ADOPT BROADER AND MORE GENEROUS POLICIES REGARDING INDOCHINESE REFUGEES. HE SAID HE HAD NO ILLUSIONS THAT HE WOULD BE AS SUCCESSFUL AS HE WANTED TO BE, PARTICULARLY GIVEN SEVERE UNEMPLOYMENT IN THE UNITED STATES. CHERNE EXPRESSED HIS DEEPEST ADMIRATION AND RESPECT FOR THE EFFORTS OF THE GOVERNMENT OF THAILAND IN TAKING CARE OF REFUGEES. HE SAID THAT FOR BOTH COUNTRIES THE MEASURE OF HELP THAT WAS NEEDED UNFORTUNATELY ALWAYS EXCEEDED CAPACITIES TO PROVIDE IT.

3. THE AMBASSADOR MENTIONED THAT AMERICAN PROGRAMS FOR INDOCHINESE REFUGEES HAD SO FAR BEEN MARKED BY TOO MUCH START AND GO. THE UNITED STATES SHOULD DEVELOP A MORE REGULARIZED LONG-RANGE PLAN.

4. PREM SAID THAT THAILAND WOULD DO ITS BEST TO RECEIVE BOAT PEOPLE BUT THAT THAILAND WAS A POOR COUNTRY. THAILAND HAD LIMITATIONS ABOUT WHAT IT COULD DO FOR BOAT PEOPLE, BOTH IN HUMANITARIAN TERMS AND IN VIEW OF RELATIONS WITH THE COUNTRIES FROM WHICH THE REFUGEES CAME. CHERNE EMPHASIZED THAT THE COMMISSION WAS NOT SIMPLY CONCENTRATING ON BOAT PEOPLE. IT WAS ALSO CONCERNED ABOUT OVERLAND ARRIVALS. BUT THE SHARP POSSIBL

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ILITIES OF DEATH IN TRAVEL BY SEA HAD CAPTURED THE WORLD'S ATTENTION.

5. HE THEN ASKED PREM WHETHER, GIVEN INCREASINGLY NORMALIZED RELATIONS WITH THE COUNTRIES OF INDOCHINA, THAILAND MIGHT CHANGE ITS GENEROSITY TOWARD REFUGEES. PREM REPLIED THAT ALTHOUGH RELATIONS WITH THOSE COUNTRIES WERE IMPROVING, THE MOMENT FOR TALKING ABOUT REFUGEES HAD NOT YET ARRIVED. HE THEN CITED THAI EXPERIENCE WITH VIETNAMESE REFUGEES WHO ENTERED JUST AFTER WORLD WAR II. THAILAND HAD TROUBLE WITH THESE INDIVIDUALS, AND ITS FIRST CONCERN WAS ITS NATIONAL SECURITY.

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INFO OCT-01 EA-10 ISO-00 HA-05 VO-05 CA-01 SY-05

AID-05 CIAE-00 DODE-00 INR-10 NSAE-00 PA-01

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6. PREM SAID THAT THILAND HAD TO PAY ATTENTION TO HOW MANY REFUGEES IT COULD TAKE. "WE DON'T MIND RECEIVING THEM BUT WE MIND IF THEY STAY TOO LONG." THAILAND WOULD BE PLEASED IF THE UNITED STATES COULD MOVE THEM ELSEWHERE AS RAPIDLY AS POSSIBLE. THE THAI PEOPLE WERE BASICALLY POOR AND THEY NEED HELP AS WELL. RUSTIN COMMENTED THAT THE COMMISSION THOROUGHLY UNDERSTOOD THAT VIEWPOINT BECAUSE THE UNITED STATES HAS POOR PEOPLE TOO.

7. CHERNE ASKED WHETHER THERE WERE ETHNIC GROUPS AMONG THE REFUGEE POPULATION THAT WOULD MORE EASILY LEND THEMSELVES T LOCAL SETTLEMENT THAN OTHERS OR WERE THEY ALL THE SAME? LT COL KAMON PRACHUAPMO, ASSISTANT DIRECTOR, DISPLACED PERSONS OPERATION CENTER, REPLIED THAT SINCE THAILAND HAD A LOT OF VIETNAMESE FROM AFTER WORLD WAR II "WE WOULD LIKE TO HAVE LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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THE NEW VIETNAMESE ARRIVALS LEAVE FIRST." THE THAI WOULD ALSO LIKE THE CAMBODIANS TO GE BECAUSE THEY JUST STAYED AROUND SLEEPING AND DOING NOTHING. THEY DIDN'T TRY TO HELP THEMSELVES. CHERNE ASKED IF THE UNITED STATES AND OTHER COUNTRIES COULD RAPIDLY MOVE OUT ALL OF THE VIETNAMESE AND THEN ALL THE CAMBODIANS, COULD THE HMONG AND LAO BE LOCALLY SETTLED IN THAILAND? PREM SAID THAILAND HAD ROUGHLY 80,000 REFUGEES FROM LAOS AND THAT WAS TOO MANY FOR THE COUNTRY. HE ALSO ASKED WHY THE UNITED STATES COULD

NOT TAKE REFUGEES DIRECTLY FROM SONGKHLA AND OTHER CAMPS TO THE UNITED STATES. CHERNE REPLIED IT WAS CLEAR TO THE COMISSION THAT SPEED OF MOVEMENT IS ESSENTIAL, AND THAT THE COMMISSION WOULD MAKE THAT RECOMMENDATION.

8. ASKED ABOUT WHETHER THE RTG WAS RECEIVING ENOUGH FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE FOR THE REFUGEES, PREM SAID THAT FOR EVERY DOLLAR THE UNHCR ISSUED THE RTG, THE RTG TURNED OVER THAT DOLLAR TO THE REFUGEES. "WE SPEND ALL THAT WE GET," BUT THE ALLOCATION PER REFUGEE WAS A LITTLE LOW. RUSTIN CONCLUDED THE MEETING BY NOTING "THE NECESSITY TO LIGHTEN THE BURDEN THAT WE HELPED TO CREATE BUT WE HAVE NOT DONE ENOUGH TO CURE."  
WHITEHOUSE

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## Message Attributes

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**Copy:** SINGLE  
**Draft Date:** 17 feb 1978  
**Decaption Date:** 01 jan 1960  
**Decaption Note:**  
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**Disposition Approved on Date:**  
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**Disposition Date:** 20 Mar 2014  
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**Litigation Codes:**  
**Litigation History:**  
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**Original Handling Restrictions:** n/a  
**Original Previous Classification:** n/a  
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**To:** STATE  
**Type:** TE  
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**Review Markings:**  
Sheryl P. Walter  
Declassified/Released  
US Department of State  
EO Systematic Review  
20 Mar 2014  
**Markings:** Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014